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IN THIS ISSUE:

News Releases—

USDA Announces Prevailing World Market Price for Upland Cotton

Mighty Mite to the Rescue

USDA to Change Formula for Valuing Butterfat in Federal Milk
Marketing Orders

USDA Increases Fee for Citrus Analyses

Crop Weeds Facing Deadly Combinations

Yeutter Names Members to Beef Promotion Board

U.S. Industry Bought 376 Million Lbs. Burley Tobacco During 1989
Marketing Season

USDA Seeks Comment on Proposed Changes to Cotton Research and
Promotion Regs

USDA Approves Outdoor Research on Transgenic Carp

Medfly Experiments in Hawaii Could Ease Pest's Threat to Mainland

News Releases

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Public Affairs

USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET PRICE FOR UPLAND COTTON

WASHINGTON, Nov. 15—Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard T. Crowder today announced the prevailing world market price, adjusted to U.S. quality and location (adjusted world price), for Strict Low Middling (SLM) 1-1/16 inch (micronaire 3.5-4.9) upland cotton (base quality) and the coarse count adjustment in effect from 12:01 a.m. Friday, Nov. 16, through midnight Thursday, Nov. 22.

Since the adjusted world price (AWP) is above the 1989 and 1990 crop base quality loan rates of 50.00 and 50.27 cents per pound, respectively, the loan repayment rates for the 1989 and 1990 crops of upland cotton during this period are equal to the respective loan rates for the specific quality and location.

The AWP will continue to be used to determine the value of upland cotton that is obtained in exchange for commodity certificates. Because the AWP in effect is above the established loan rate, loan deficiency payments are not available for 1990-crop upland cotton sold during this period.

Based on data for the week ending Nov. 15, the AWP for upland cotton and the coarse count adjustment are determined as follows:

Chart on next page.

Adjusted World Price	
Northern Europe Price	82.31
Adjustments:	
Average U.S. spot market location	13.25
SLM 1-1/16 inch cotton	2.15
Average U.S. location	0.35
Sum of Adjustments	<u>-15.75</u>
ADJUSTED WORLD PRICE	66.56 cents/lb.
Coarse Count Adjustment	
Northern Europe Price	82.31
Northern Europe Coarse Count Price	<u>-77.28</u>
	5.03
Adjustment to SLM 1-inch cotton	<u>-4.10</u>
COARSE COUNT ADJUSTMENT	0.93 cents/lb.

Because of the Thanksgiving holiday, the next AWP and coarse count adjustment announcement will be made on Friday, Nov. 23.

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MIGHTY MITE TO THE RESCUE

WASHINGTON—A mite from Mediterranean Europe, now adapting to its new home in the United States, could give farmers relief from a weed that binds crop plants in a deadly embrace, according to a U.S. Department of Agriculture scientist.

“This small mite has been given the okay for a big job—controlling one of the worst weeds strangling corn, wheat and other U.S. crops,” said Sara S. Rosenthal, an entomologist with the USDA’s Agricultural Research Service.

The weed, a vine known as field bindweed, is an “out-of-control morning glory,” she said. “It can smother crop plants by winding tightly around their stems and by stealing their food and water with roots that may reach 30 feet deep. It also serves as a reservoir for crop insects and diseases.”

The mite, *Aceria malherbae*, is only 1/75th of an inch long, said Rosenthal at ARS’ Rangeland Weeds Laboratory, Bozeman, Mont.

Earlier, she proved that it gobbles stems and leaves only of field bindweed and closely related plants, none of which is a crop plant.

Rosenthal's colleagues—ARS entomologists Culver J. Deloach Jr. and Paul E. Boldt at the Grassland Protection Research Unit, Temple, Texas—released thousands of the mites in northern Texas and New Jersey in the spring of 1989. The mites survived winter and reproduced at both sites. Scientists will continue to measure how well they thrive and control bindweed.

The scientists explained their research in the latest issue of the agency's magazine, *Agricultural Research*.

She said field bindweed—the 15th worst weed in the United States—is most serious in the West and Midwest, where corn and wheat are particularly hard hit.

“This weed is difficult and costly to control with herbicides and cultivation, and continues to spread despite newer herbicides used against it and other perennial weeds,” said Rosenthal.

Scientists at the agency's Biological Control of Weeds Laboratory near Rome, Italy collected the mites and sent them to Boldt and Deloach. The Rome laboratory specializes in locating bugs to prey on weeds that—like bindweed—are native to Europe.

Over the past century, many weeds in the U.S. snuck into the United States by hitchhiking inside shipments of crop seeds, but quarantines and inspections minimize that risk today.

Field bindweed invaded the U.S. in the late 1800's.

The mite joins *Tyta luctuosa*, a moth imported from the Rome lab to eat bindweed leaves and stems. This summer marks the third attempt at getting *Tyta* established, Deloach noted. Previous releases failed because the trial areas were too hot or too dry. This summer the scientists released the moth in locations with more favorable climates—southwestern Arkansas and central Missouri.

ARS entomologists are continuing their search for other exotic mites and insects. Often, they said, controlling a weed with its natural enemies requires a combination of hungry bugs that prefer dining on different parts of the same pest plant. The insects eventually sap enough energy from the weed to debilitate or kill it.

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Issued: Nov. 16, 1990

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USDA TO CHANGE FORMULA FOR VALUING BUTTERFAT IN FEDERAL MILK MARKETING ORDERS

WASHINGTON, Nov. 15—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is proposing to reduce the value of butterfat in the formula determining milk prices paid dairy farmers under all federal milk marketing orders.

Daniel D. Haley, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the change is based on the unanimous wishes of major sectors of the U.S. dairy industry that testified at a national hearing July 31 in Alexandria, Va. "Paying dairy farmers less for the butterfat in the milk they sell to processors will recognize the lowered value of butterfat in today's marketplace caused by consumers' changing preferences," he said.

Currently, butterfat in milk is given a value according to a "butterfat differential" from a base of 3.5 percent. Milk with a higher percentage of butterfat gets a higher price, and milk with a lower percentage gets a lower price, Haley said. The differentials are gauged in increments of one-tenth of one percent, he said.

The new formula would benefit milk wholesalers, or "handlers," under federal milk orders who, with the old formula for butterfat, are paying farmers one price for the butterfat in their milk and then can only sell surplus butterfat to butter plants at a lower price. Under the new formula, handlers would pay less for the butterfat. While the new formula will reduce the value of butterfat, it will increase the value of skim milk, and the overall net income to producers will remain the same, Haley said.

Use of the new formula is contingent on producers approving it. USDA is determining producer support through six federal marketing order referendums and numerous polls of milk marketing cooperatives. Authority to determine such support is in the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937.

Federal milk marketing orders, which cover the major population centers in the continental United States, except California, provide producers and consumers with the security of steady supplies of fairly priced milk.

Details of the changed butterfat pricing formula will be published as an emergency decision in the Nov. 19 Federal Register. Copies are available

from any federal milk marketing order office, or AMS, USDA, Dairy Division, Order Formulation Branch, Rm. 2968, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456; telephone (202) 447-6273.

Clarence Steinberg (202) 447-6179

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USDA INCREASES FEE FOR CITRUS ANALYSES

WASHINGTON, Nov. 15—Effective Dec. 19, the U.S. Department of Agriculture is increasing by \$4 the hourly fee charged for laboratory analyses of citrus juices and certain other citrus products performed by its Agricultural Marketing Service. The fee was \$25 per hour.

AMS Administrator Daniel D. Haley said the increase covers the cost of citrus analyses provided by the agency's Commodities Scientific Support Division. Major factors contributing to the need for the fee increase are increased costs of reagents (chemicals used in analysing substances) and instrumentation, four salary increases to federal employees over four years, and increased employee fringe benefits. The fee was \$25 per hour.

Haley said the AMS Commodities Scientific Support Division tests citrus on a fee-for-service basis. AMS provides a host of other sophisticated, fee-based laboratory testing services, and also conducts mandated testing for aflatoxin in peanuts and for chemical and microbiological residues in egg products, he said.

The fee increase for citrus analyses will be published as a final rule in the Nov. 19 Federal Register. Copies are available from the director, Commodities Scientific Support Division, AMS, USDA, Rm. 3064-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456; telephone (202) 447-5231.

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CROP WEEDS FACING DEADLY COMBINATIONS

WASHINGTON—"Cocktail time" is fast approaching for crop-hindering weeds, but few of them are likely to survive the party.

Roy J. Smith, Jr., an agronomist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service, has been studying the "cocktail" approach to weed control, blending chemicals and natural weapons like fungi to solve multiple problems in a single sweep.

Smith doesn't invent the ingredients; those come from commercial manufacturers and research laboratories, and include both commercially available herbicides and experimental materials.

His specialty is the combinations. Using fungi and herbicides, he's blended substances capable of hitting two weeds at once, and one blend even goes after three.

While Smith works primarily in rice, he says there's no reason why similar combinations can't be organized against weeds in other crops. And he emphasizes that the combinations aren't creating brand-new weapons—simply blending two that can co-exist peacefully as each goes about its business of fighting weeds.

A basic ingredient in Smith's recipes is a form of the fungus *Colletotrichum gloeosporioides*, marketed by Ecogen Inc. of Langhorne, Pa., as Collego. An ounce of the fungal spores—about 78 billion spores—per acre will wipe out northern jointvetch, a major weed in rice fields.

"Northern jointvetch makes little black seeds that get into the rice, so farmers are paid less for their rice," said Smith, who works at the Rice Production and Weed Control Research unit operated by ARS at Stuttgart, Ark. "We had other weeds we needed to control, too, so we started looking at possible combinations of fungal pathogens and herbicides that would be environmentally safe."

One of the early finds was a fungus that attacks winged water primrose, an aquatic weed in rice. Researchers were able to grow the fungus in the laboratory, put it in rice fields and wipe out the weed using only an ounce of spores per acre. Best of all, it mixed well with the fungus that attacks northern jointvetch.

"It looked really good in research," Smith recalled. "But there was one problem—winged water primrose isn't prevalent enough to justify a company developing this commercially. Perhaps in the future if this weed becomes a big problem, someone might reconsider this."

Hemp sesbania, on the other hand, is a big enough problem to attract major herbicide company attention. Seen in both rice and soybean fields, hemp sesbania, like northern jointvetch, sullies the harvest with little black seeds, resulting in lower payments for the crop. Hemp sesbania and northern jointvetch are considered “companion weeds,” since they like the same type of environment and often infest the same fields.

The chemical acifluorfen is commonly used to control hemp sesbania, but does little to block northern jointvetch. Smith discovered that acifluorfen can be applied in conjunction with the fungus against northern jointvetch, and that combination now is used by farmers.

Similarly, bentazon, the chemical used against the aquatic weed redstem, also works well in combination with the fungus, Smith said.

“You’re not as likely to see all three of these weeds—northern jointvetch, redstem and hemp sesbania—in one field, but if you do, we’ve even developed a three-way mix that gives good control of all three,” he added.

The next, and tougher, step is finding a fungicide that fights crop-diseases without also wiping out the northern jointvetch-fighting fungus, Smith said.

“The amount of rice that’s treated with a fungicide has increased tremendously in the last seven to eight years,” he explained. “But the main one used is benomyl, and it’s quite injurious to *C. gloeosporioides*. As it stands now, a farmer has to choose between using the fungus for his weeds or a fungicide for crop diseases.”

One promising newcomer is a fungicide called iprodione. Smith said it can’t be applied at the same time as the beneficial fungus, but the fungus can survive in a field treated earlier with iprodione.

Even more encouraging is an experimental fungicide called pencycuron. According to Smith, this can be mixed directly with *C. gloeosporioides* without injuring the fungus. “It’ll be a pretty good step forward when it’s approved for use on rice,” he said.

“We also hope to find other natural fungi like the one that attacks winged water primrose,” Smith continued. “I think they’re out there somewhere for most of our major weeds in rice, particularly the aquatic weeds. “We are constantly researching ways to produce and improve weed control strategies that protect the environment. I think these types of mixes are among the most promising,” Smith said.

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YEUTTER NAMES MEMBERS TO BEEF PROMOTION BOARD

WASHINGTON, Nov. 19—Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter today announced 21 reappointments and 16 new appointments to the national Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board. All but one will serve three-year terms beginning Dec. 1, 1990. The single appointment is for one year to fill a vacancy created by a resignation.

The beef board is composed of 111 members representing 38 states and three regions. The secretary selects the appointees from cattle producers and importers nominated by organizations representing beef, dairy, veal and importer interests.

Reappointed members representing cattle producers, by state and region, are: Arkansas—Walter L. Tullos; Colorado—Harold L. Felte; Florida—James C. Bass; Idaho—Thomas E. Shaw; Illinois—Randall R. DeSutter; Kansas—William M. Beezley; Kentucky—Brainard L. Palmer-Ball Sr.; Minnesota—James C. Bryan; Missouri—Arlen H. Schwinke and Junior Simpson;

Nebraska—Richard W. Mercer, Donald E. Moore; North Dakota—Richard M. Tokach; Ohio—Morris M. VanGorden; Oklahoma—Creede Speake, Jr., Harl E. Merklin; Texas—Charles E. Ball; Virginia—Richard S. Ellis IV; Wisconsin—William L. Ehrke; the northwest region (Alaska, Hawaii and Washington)—Harold S. Cox.

Newly appointed members, by state, are: Alabama—L.D. Fitzpatrick; California—Myron L. Openshaw; Georgia—Andrew H. Lemmon; Iowa—Harlen A. Kardel; Kansas—Janet L. Ferguson-Lyons; Montana—John P. Eidel; New York—Jean Shwartz; Pennsylvania—Ralph E. Dotterer; South Dakota—Richard G. Kjerstad; Texas—Hilmar G. Moore, Julia R. Marietta, J.G. Walker Jr., and Frank V. Callahan.

Reappointed to represent importers is Frances M.L. Cassidy, and newly appointed to represent them are Robert A. Far and Robert F. Wolf. Robert M. Carter of Texas was appointed to fill the vacancy resulting from a resignation of a Texas member of the board. Carter's term will expire in 1991. Established under the Beef Promotion and Research Act of 1985, the board has implemented a national program designed to improve the beef industry's position in the marketplace. The program, approved for continuation in a May 1988 referendum, is funded by a mandatory \$1-per-head assessment on all cattle marketed in the United States, and by an equivalent assessment on imported cattle and beef. Assessments began Oct. 1, 1986. Members of the initial board were

appointed to one, two, and three-year terms in 1986. Each year, approximately one-third of the positions are filled for three-year terms.

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service monitors operations of the Board.

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U.S. INDUSTRY BOUGHT 376 MILLION LBS. BURLEY TOBACCO DURING 1989 MARKETING SEASON

WASHINGTON, Nov. 19—The U. S. Department of Agriculture today announced that U.S. cigarette manufacturers purchased 375.9 million pounds of farm sales weight burley tobacco during the Oct. 1, 1989 - Sept. 30, 1990 marketing season (excluding pre-1985 loan stocks).

The manufacturers' purchase intentions for the 1989 crop were 427 million pounds. Actual purchases were 88 percent of intended purchases.

The Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938 requires major domestic manufacturers to purchase at least 90 percent of their intended purchases to avoid the assessment of a penalty. However, because 1989 crop marketings were 24.6 percent below the 1989 effective quota, manufacturers' required purchases were reduced by 24.6 percent. Any manufacturer who failed to purchase 90 percent of this revised quantity is subject to a penalty equal to twice the no-net-cost tobacco program assessment rate of 1.66 cents per pound for each pound of the deficiency in purchases.

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USDA SEEKS COMMENT ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO COTTON RESEARCH AND PROMOTION REGS

WASHINGTON, Nov. 19—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is seeking comment on proposals to amend the Cotton Research and Promotion Order's regulations regarding penalties for failure to remit assessments to the Cotton Board promptly and in full.

The assessments fund operations of the Cotton Board, which sponsors research and promotion projects to advance the position of cotton in the marketplace.

Daniel D. Haley, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the amendments to the order would:

- specify that interest charges be imposed on first buyers of cotton (known also as “collecting handlers”) who are sent a second certified mail notice of past-due assessments in any one marketing year;

- stipulate that interest and late payment charges be applied from the first working day on or following the 20th day of the month in which assessments were due;

- establish procedures for publishing names of collecting handlers delinquent in remitting assessments to the Cotton Board; and,

- allow notification of growers that their particular collecting handlers failed to remit assessments.

As proponent of the proposal, the Cotton Board claims the amendments are necessary to encourage the few collecting handlers delinquent in their assessments to remit them more promptly, Haley said.

The Cotton Research and Promotion Order, under which the board functions, is authorized by the 1966 Cotton Research and Promotion Act.

Notice of the proposed amendments will appear as a proposed rule in the Nov. 20 Federal Register. Comments, postmarked no later than Dec. 20, should be sent to Craig Shackelford, Cotton Division, AMS, USDA, Rm. 2641-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090. Copies of the notice are available from Shackelford at that address; tel. (202) 447-2259.

Clarence Steinberg (202) 447-6179

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USDA APPROVES OUTDOOR RESEARCH ON TRANSGENIC CARP

WASHINGTON, Nov. 19—The U.S. Department of Agriculture has completed an environmental assessment of a proposed USDA-funded experiment with transgenic carp and concluded that the research will not significantly affect the environment. The decision clears the way for the research to proceed, pending USDA's inspection of a newly-built fish hatchery facility and outdoor research ponds in Alabama that will contain the experiment.

The carp are termed “transgenic” because they contain a gene transferred from another species, in this case a growth hormone gene from rainbow trout. The gene transfer was conducted in the laboratory using recombinant deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) technology. The new hatchery and ponds are located at Alabama’s Agricultural Experiment Station at Auburn University, Auburn.

John Patrick Jordan, administrator of USDA’s Cooperative State Research Service, said, “The research using carp as a model will further basic knowledge and experience in the use of recombinant DNA technology to develop improved fish genetic lines, such as catfish for aquaculture production.”

According to Dr. Rex A. Dunham, the project’s principal investigator, the research will evaluate the effects of the trout growth hormone gene on the reproductive capacity of brood carp, determine whether offspring of the carp inherit the trout growth hormone gene, and determine the effects of the inherited gene on the survival, growth rate, and behavior of the offspring.

USDA received public comments on an initial environmental assessment and preliminary finding of no significant impact that was published in the Federal Register Feb. 16. As a result of those comments, Auburn University has built new research ponds and a new fish hatchery facility with state-of-the-art safety design features.

USDA’s notice of availability of a revised environmental assessment and its “Finding of No Significant Impact” will be published in the Nov. 21 Federal Register.

The research project uses nine transgenic carp that will be artificially spawned indoors. A total of 50,000 of the fry—half of them transgenic, half controls—will then be stocked in 10 new outdoor research ponds. After about 3 months, when the fry have grown to the fingerling stage (weighing 30 grams), the number of fish will be reduced to 3,000 and marked for identification. Half of these will be transgenic; the others, controls. Researchers will study the fingerlings until they are about 15 months of age. The experiment will be terminated before the fish reach sexual maturity.

Copies of the environmental assessment and “Finding of No Significant Impact” are available from the USDA, Office of Agricultural Biotechnology, Room 324-A, Administration Bldg., 14th and Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250.

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MEDFLY EXPERIMENTS IN HAWAII COULD EASE PEST’S THREAT TO MAINLAND

WASHINGTON—Medflies could become less threatening to the U.S. mainland if new control strategies being tested in Hawaii thwart this pest and its relatives, a U.S. Department of Agriculture scientist says.

Among the anti-medfly tactics are a powerful new experimental lure and counterattacks by beneficial wasps, says J. Wendell Snow of USDA’s Agricultural Research Service in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Giving federal and state agencies these and other tools to eliminate the pesky flies from the islands could “break the ‘Hawaii connection’ for mainland invasions of medfly and other fruit flies,” he says. This would also help Hawaii’s own growers and backyard gardeners, adds Snow, acting director of ARS’ Tropical Fruit and Vegetable Research Laboratory.

The medfly and its relatives—the melon, oriental and Malaysian fruit flies—can hitchhike from Hawaii inside fresh produce mailed illegally to the mainland or smuggled in luggage by airplane and ship passengers.

Snow says the flies can easily adapt to California and other sunbelt states such as Arizona, Texas and Florida. “One or another of these four pests dines on almost every kind of fruit or vegetable you can buy at your super-market—from apricots to zucchini,” he says. None of the fly species is native to Hawaii.

On the island of Hawaii, researchers are pushing ahead with tests of a new medfly attractant, called Ceralure. Its use might someday replace today’s aerial spraying of the insecticide malathion.

When mixed in a gel with small amounts of malathion and a thickener, Ceralure could be applied from the ground to trees and utility poles, Snow says. Medfly males attracted to the lure would land on blobs of gel and be killed by contact with the insecticide. Lacking males, medfly populations would die out.

According to Snow, this method would call for using “only a fraction of the malathion that’s typically needed for aerial spraying.”

In medfly-infested coffee groves on the island of Kauai, the scientists plan to test two tiny wasps that are the medfly’s natural enemies. Harmless to humans and animals, the wasps attack and kill medfly in its larval or wormlike stage.

“Both of these wasps have lived in the Hawaiian Islands for the past 40 years,” says Snow, “but there aren’t enough in nature to keep the fruit flies in check. So, as soon as our plans are approved by environmental agencies, we’ll raise millions more wasps in the laboratory and bombard the coffee groves with them.” The wasps are *Diachasmimorpha longicaudata* and *D. tryoni*.

ARS scientists are also trying a new spin on an old medfly control technique—use of sterile flies to sabotage the pest’s mating efforts. When sterile flies are released to combat medfly outbreaks on the mainland, typically half of the sterilized flies are male, and half are female.

But on Kauai, the researchers are testing a new, experimental strain that enables them to alter that natural ratio. The unique strain, developed in a Netherlands laboratory, is easily sex-sorted. A high-speed machine segregates the sexes based on the color of their cocoon-like pupal cases.

“That can’t be done with conventional strains,” Snow says. “To increase chances that wild fertile females will mate only with sterilized males, it makes sense to assemble a males-only army of sterile flies. However, you can’t write off the sterile females completely, because they do some good by mating with wild males. Our experiments with the sexsorted strain may reveal the ideal sex ratio.”

If these approaches and others on the drawing board can rid Hawaii of fruit flies, he says, “producers of papaya, for example, would no longer foot the bill for hot-air or hot-water treatments required to ensure the fruit is free of maggots. Also, growers could boost exports of this and other exotic crops to markets on the mainland and in Pacific Rim countries.”

Some exotics, like carambola, lychee and rambutan, aren’t exported because of the flies, he noted.

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